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ABSTRACT

This paper, the second in a series, enumerates and analyzes the duties of the community college department/division chairman and makes observations on the evolving role of the chairman from a quasi-administrative officer to a ministerial functionary. It looks at the relationship of the chairman to the dean of instruction who is his immediate supervisor and to the members of the department with whom he is closely associated and who played an important role in his selection or election. The place of the department in the administrative structure is examined. Research studies on the department/division are reviewed in this paper, and it is suggested that the quality of performance of the chairman depends upon his own inner resources; a successful chairman adjusts to the personalities with whom he must work. (Author/SW)

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THE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT/DIVISION CHAIRMAN IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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INTRODUCTION

Since the middle of the 1960's numerous in-service training conferences and seminars for department chairmen have been sponsored by consortiums of colleges, universities and state agencies. Among these were a series of week-long seminars held during 1970-1972 by the League for Innovation in the Community Colleges, a two-day conference by Sam Houston State University in 1972, a three-day workshop by the Kansas-Nebraska Consortium in 1973, workshops in 1972 and 1973 by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education and a special in-service training program by the Florida Division of Community Colleges and Florida State University in 1972.

For the first three conferences the ERIC Clearinghouse provided papers on various aspects of the role of the department/division chairmen. At the conferences the chairmen requested that separate papers or a book be prepared on the duties and responsibilities of the department chairman, the role of the department/division in the college structure, the characteristics and the role of the department/division chairman and the conditions of employment, qualifications, in-service training, selection methods and patterns of remuneration.

This paper, "The Duties and Responsibilities of the Department/Division Chairman in the Community Colleges," is the second of a series that will cover most of the topics of interest mentioned in the preceding paragraph. It reviews research studies on the duties a chairman performs or should perform and his relationship to the dean of instruction and other department members. The major duties of the department chairman, which are only a

fraction of those actually listed, are highlighted. The conclusion lists the major findings on the duties and responsibilities of the department/division chairman and suggests that the quality of performance of the chairman depends upon his own inner resources; a successful chairman adjusts to the personalities with whom he must work as well as to the college community.

THE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT/DIVISION CHAIRMAN IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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Among administrative and semi-administrative college positions none receives as much scrutiny as does the chairman of the department or division.* The most obvious form of this scrutiny is the enumeration and analysis of the duties he performs or should perform. A parallel aspect of this study is the relationship of the chairman to the dean of instruction who is his immediate supervisor and to the members of the department with whom he is closely associated and who played an important part in his selection or election. A third aspect revolves around the place of the department in the administrative structure. In recent years a considerable number of administrators have attempted to replace the department with another organization more closely subject to administrative control.

In this article the focus will be on the enumeration and analysis of the chairman's duties along with observations on the evolving role of the chairman from a quasi-administrative officer to a ministerial functionary (See "Prospects for Middlemanagement." Change Magazine: Community College Supplement. 4: 32a-32d. October 1972, for a brief review of the other aspects of the chairman and the department.).

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* In this paper no distinction is made between chairmen of departments and divisions, although it recognized that some of the observations do not apply for division chairmen who have administrative status.

Nearly all studies of the duties performed by chairmen include general or detailed lists derived from questionnaires, collective bargaining agreements, faculty handbooks, self studies for accreditation purposes, and other documents. Along with the lists some investigators attempt to place the duties in rank order determined by their perceptions or by analyzing those of chairmen, administrators, faculty and experts. Enumerating, defining and analyzing the chairman's duties may be an index of the importance the investigators attach to the position or an effort to reconcile the apparent discrepancy between the major responsibilities such lists seem to accord the chairman with the relatively minor administrative role he plays in the governance of the college.

Often the lists seem to be an aggregate of every conceivable duty that a chairman in some college is performing or that the compiler believes he should perform. As a result many lists are so lengthy that they appear "horrendous...no chairman could possibly perform all the functions...and hence the entire business acquires a touch of absurdity" (Brann and Emmet).

One of the most detailed in length and specificity is a duty statement for the division chairmen of Harrisburg (PA) Area Community College. It contains 69 discrete items under four broad headings: general, instructional services, student personnel services, and administrative services (Brann and Emmet). Another questionnaire designed to secure information on the extent to which a community college chairman is involved in the performance of duties lists 51 possible items under five headings: general administration, curriculum and instruction, teacher improvement, student relations and community relations (Anthony, 1972). Still another study uses a conceptual

framework in which functional categories are grouped under: production, maintenance, boundary, production supportive, boundary, institutional supportive, adaptive, and managerial. All together the author lists 46 activities (Smith 1972). Other studies mentioned later contain lists of similar length. By contrast when duty statements appear in collective bargaining agreements they seldom contain more than 15 items. Illustrative of such lists is the following prepared by Anthony for his study (1972):

Duties of the Department Chairman

A. General Administration:

1. Coordinating departmental programs with the objective of the college
2. Preparing teaching schedules
3. Conducting departmental functions
4. Coordinating departmental functions
5. Acting as liaison between the faculty and the administration
6. Allocating faculty office space
7. Selecting and evaluating instructional equipment and supplies
8. Supervising the care and storage of equipment
9. Preparing the departmental budget
10. Developing college publications relating to departmental programs
11. Developing examination schedules
12. Selecting and supervising secretarial and clerical staff
13. Planning for improved facilities

B. Curriculum & Instruction:

1. Developing appropriate curricula

2. Developing program objectives
3. Developing course outlines
4. Conducting programs of educational research
5. Selecting and evaluating texts and teaching materials
6. Evaluating the effectiveness of the educational program
7. Evaluating instructional aids and resources
8. Encouraging curricula and instructional experimentation
9. Developing articulation guidelines with senior institutions
10. Developing articulation guidelines with high schools

C. Teacher Improvement:

1. Identifying prospective faculty needs
2. Recruiting and interviewing prospective faculty members
3. Recommending faculty for appointment
4. Orienting new faculty to the college program
5. Supervising and guiding faculty
6. Evaluating faculty members
7. Recommending faculty for promotion and tenure
8. Promoting faculty relations and morale
9. Assisting faculty with teaching problems
10. Encouraging professional growth of staff
11. Visiting classes and observing teaching practices

D. Student Relations:

1. Establishing criteria and policies for student standards
2. Evaluating previous training of students

3. Selecting and classifying students according to ability
4. Enforcing student regulations
5. Placing students in employment
6. Counseling and advising students on programs
7. Conducting follow-up studies of students
8. Orientating new students to the program
9. Promoting student morale
10. Organizing and directing co-curricular activities

E. Community Relations:

1. Developing program advisory committees
2. Organizing cooperative work experience programs
3. Making public appearances before service clubs, etc.
4. Providing advisory services to the community
5. Working with community groups to develop specific programs
6. Arranging for student and faculty visits to community institutions
7. Serving on community improvement committees

From a review of the duty statements, one unfamiliar with his status in practice could conclude that a chairman is an important and highly respected administrator. A case can even be made from such a review that a chairman has a relationship to the department comparable to that of the president to the college. He seems to be the head of a unit which is a microcosm of the college, a satrapy, a cluster college--albeit with a specialized function. From the duty statements it seems as if the locus of power resides in the chairman. On paper he reports to the dean of instruction but to perform the

duties assigned to him he must also act through, if not under the supervision of, the dean of student personnel, the business manager and the dean of community services. While duty statements indicate that a chairman has responsibility for a wide variety of activities in administration, curriculum and instruction, teacher improvement, student personnel, finance and community relations, in practice, investigators report that he performs only a limited number in the first three and a few in the last three.

It is questionable if a chairman could perform all of the duties assigned to him in the duty statements. Probably, what happens in the tabulation of the answers to questionnaires on the chairman's role is that some respondents indicate chairmen perform a certain set of duties and others a different set. Omitting overlapping or duplication, the responses represent the 50 to 60 different duties often reported.

Another reason for the large number of duties is that surveys usually classify chairmen as they do deans and presidents. But in most colleges the number of chairmen is not only larger than any other administrative group, but represents individuals with widely varying duties. The most obvious differences are between chairmen of liberal arts departments (history, political science, English) and vocational-technical departments (auto maintenance, paramedical, engineering). For the former, purchase, replacement, repair and inventorying of equipment is a minor responsibility compared to the greater importance for the latter group. Likewise, community activities such as job placement, membership on advisory committees and student placement in work study assignment or clinical laboratories are primary responsibilities for some chairmen and minor for others. As a result of this practice of

homogeneously classifying such a diverse group a multiplier effect operates when enumerating duties of chairmen as a class.

Administrators' preferences for a simple classification scheme rather than a complex one contributes to this distortion or exaggeration of duties. They naturally avoid classifications that upset organizational unity and raise problems.

There is also a tendency of investigators and administrators to divide broad responsibilities into their component parts. A general duty such as "preparation of the departmental schedule" may be broken down into four duties: (1) preparation of the semester schedule, (2) preparation of the faculty schedule, (3) preparation of the room schedule, and, (4) preparation of the time schedule. Each schedule serves a definite purpose but each could be derived by a check from the semester schedule. It is very much like cross-indexing. Essentially, the four are part of one responsibility or duty. Another example, responsibility for evaluating of instructors can be divided into: (1) visiting classes of new instructors each semester, (2) visiting classes of tenured instructors once every three years, (3) conferring with instructors after the class visit, (4) advising instructors on techniques for improvement of performance, (5) preparing a summary of the interview, (6) recommending faculty for promotion to advanced rank, and, (7) recommending termination of service.

Two factors that have a bearing on the number of responsibilities assigned to chairmen are the variation in administrative style and leadership of the president and especially the dean of instruction plus the relative abilities of the chairmen. Administrators often assign different roles to

chairmen depending upon the confidence they place in their ability to carry out their responsibilities. Deans especially are in a position to expand or contract the number of duties and also to determine how much authority to delegate. Consequently it is not unusual in a college to have differentiated duties and authority among the chairmen, depending to a large extent upon the dean's evaluation of the administrative and leadership qualities of the various individuals assigned. Of course, chairmen also vary in the amount of work they do and in their willingness to exert leadership in the conduct of the department.

A realistic appraisal of the duties a chairman performs must also take into account that many of them are repetitive and amenable to easily followed guidelines. As such they can be performed by the department secretary after the enrollment figures are reported by the instructors or they may be obtained from the data processing center if the college has a computer. Instructions on how he wants the statistics arranged once outlined can be followed by a clerk. Duties such as selection of textbooks, library books, audio visual materials and equipment; curriculum design and revision; planning departmental group activities are shared with or delegated to instructors.

The most important observation in appraising the number and arduousness of a chairman's duties is that in very few of them does he have primary responsibility. In most, he acts in an advisory capacity. In such duties as recruitment, hiring, orientation, firing, salary, promotion, assignment of workload and curriculum development, primary responsibility ordinarily rests with the dean of instruction and/or the president. As we will point

out collective bargaining agreements are constricting still further the chairman's discretion and judgment in the discharge of his duties.

Recognizing that duty lists seem too long, complex, and unrealistic, researchers have tried to determine which of the large number of duties are actually performed by chairmen or that chairmen, faculty, administrators and experts feel they should perform. From his 46 items, Smith isolated seven, which chairmen, faculty members and upper echelon administrators gave a 90 percent positive response to duties that department chairmen "absolutely must" or "preferably should" perform. These are:

1. Provides orientation for new faculty members
2. Involves faculty members in the decision making process of the department
3. Encourages faculty to participate in conventions, conferences, professional associations, etc.
4. Reports departmental accomplishments to his dean or immediate supervisor
5. Develops and reviews long-range departmental goals and objectives
6. Plans for long-range departmental equipment needs
7. Prepares the department's budget for submission to the central administration (Smith, 1972).

If the criteria were modified to include those which receive more than a 90 percent response from two out of the three groups and 80 percent or more from the third, five more would be included:

8. Approves all departmental purchase requests
9. Plans curriculum changes with the faculty for two or more years in advance

10. Reviews trends of departmental student characteristics and identifies implications for department programs

11. Reviews new developments in departmental subject matter in other community colleges and identifies implications for department programs

12. Oversees internal allocation of budget funds

In his study of 173 colleges, Anthony (1971) reported the rankings of chairmen, immediate supervisors and experts on 51 functions. He found a high positive correlation between the experts' responses and those of the chairmen and his supervisors. No correlation fell below .62 and the majority were in the .80 to .90 range. Since the correlations were high the description of Anthony's findings will be confined mainly to the chairmen's response.

Chairmen ranked general administration, curriculum and instruction, and teacher improvement as the most frequently performed and the most important areas of responsibility. Student relations and community relations ranked low in frequency of performance and in degree of importance. The five most frequently performed specific duties were all in the general administration area: conducting departmental functions, preparing teaching schedules, preparing the departmental budget, coordinating departmental functions and coordinating departmental programs with the objectives of the college.

Of the next five rankings, number 6, "developing appropriate curriculum" and 10, "developing program objectives" were in curriculum and instruction while number 7, "identifying prospective faculty needs," 8, "recruiting and interviewing prospective faculty members," and 9, "recommending faculty for appointment" were in the teacher improvement area.

The highest ranking in the student relations area was 26, "enforcing student regulations" and in the community relations area it was 25, "developing program advisory committees."

Among the low rankings were: "developing examination schedules" 51, "placing students in employment" 50, "organizing and directing co-curricular activities" 46, "selecting and supervising clerical staff" 32, and "developing college publications relating to departmental programs" 31. "Supervising the care and storage of equipment" ranked 27 just below the median.

Only two items in the curriculum and instruction category ranked below 30, i.e., "conducting programs of educational research," 48 and "developing articulation guidelines with high schools," 35. Yet "developing guidelines with senior institutions" ranked 23; an indication of the relative importance of these activities.

"Visiting classes and observing teaching practice" ranked 30, the lowest in the teacher improvement category; but "evaluating faculty members" ranked 12. When evaluating the importance of visiting classes the chairmen ranked it 32, indicating that not only did they not visit classes, but, that they did not consider doing so important; or it may reflect the taboo of visiting classes (except those of substitute and probationary teachers), the unsatisfactory and/or indifferent nature of the practice, the chairman's reluctance to rate his colleagues on classroom performance with the consequent job threat an unfavorable rating may create, or a combination of two or more of them. Worth noting are the findings of most investigators that faculty evaluation is the most difficult duty chairmen are expected to perform. From this, one may also predict that the expectations of legislators for accountability

and evaluation of instructors are unlikely to be fulfilled.

The low ratings of student and community relations in the Anthony study coincided with those obtained by most research studies reviewed. Ravetch (1972) found that only 5 percent of the chairmen counseled students and less than 15 percent conducted follow-up studies, provided career information or recruited subject area majors. Surprisingly, he found that 40 percent co-ordinated extra curricular activities. Freligh (1973) observed that chairmen are least likely to have sole responsibility for student advisement. Of Pierce's (1971) fourteen "areas of high task involvement" of science division chairmen, only one, "articulating courses with four year institutions", in any way related to student or community relations. The twelve items selected from Smith's (1972) list for Michigan college chairmen includes only one activity that relates to students and none relating to community relations.

It cannot be inferred from the above observations that all chairmen rank student and community relations low. Chairmen in the vocational-technical areas do a large amount of student selection, advising and job placement--duties that involve student and community relations. Some of the chairmen also perform duties of a co-curricular nature in sponsoring departmental clubs and alumni groups. There is evidence that departmental or special interest activities in the vocational-technical areas are more successful than all-college activities.

What these analyses disclose is that duty lists, whether lengthy or short, give no clue to the authority a chairman exercises. One must examine each situation to determine what authority is delegated to the chairman. In a few colleges chairmen exercise a great deal of personal discretion and

judgment but, from the studies and comments of chairmen at in-service training conferences, the conclusion seems inescapable that the great majority do not. The milieu in which the chairman operates makes it difficult for him to become an effective administrator. He occupies a role that forces him to face two ways--toward the dean of instruction who is his immediate supervisor and from whom he receives whatever authority he is permitted to exercise and toward his departmental colleagues with whom he shares responsibility for carrying out many of his duties.

An important influence affecting his relationship with the instructors is that they played a part in his selection and often have the opportunity to determine whether or not he shall continue as chairman. It is not surprising, therefore, to note that the movement toward faculty self-governance has had its greatest impact on the chairman. Most of the gains made by instructors impinge on the chairman's duties. Of course, they also affect the authority of the dean, but this is beyond the purview of this discussion except as it relates to the chairman as a subordinate.

Administrators are in a large part, responsible for the erosion of the department chairman's responsibilities. They fail to match the duties assigned with the necessary authority; the pivotal role he plays in the organization with status as an administrator. It is an anomaly to require only the chairman among all administrators to stand for election at periodic intervals, a practice which leads to a rotational policy and emphasizes the subservience of the chairman to the instructors in the department.

Perhaps administrators have given up on changing the chairman's role under the department system. Those who want to reassert control over the

teaching-learning unit are exerting their efforts toward substituting a different structure for the department with an administrator as the head (Lombardi 1972).

Collective bargaining agreements are defining the status of the chairman as a faculty member or an administrator by the simple process of defining the members of the employee bargaining unit. In general, if the chairman is excluded from membership in the unit, his status is administrative; if he is included, it is faculty. However, this does not resolve the problem of his dual role. Nor does it seem to enhance his status. If he is classified as an instructor he has the double burden of trying to fulfill his obligations as a supervisor or ministerial representative of the administration and maintain his loyalty to his conferees in the bargaining unit. If he is classified an administrator or non-faculty instructor in the department, he has to deal with their organizational representative as the guardian of their rights under the contract and for protection in a dispute or disciplinary action.

The extent of the erosion of the authority a chairman exercises is clearly evident in the collective bargaining agreements covering about one-fourth of the public community colleges. Section after section in these agreements define or describe the rights and freedom of instructors in such matters as workload limits; evaluation procedures; tenure; the academic calendar; guidelines for individual scheduling and overload assignments during the regular and summer sessions; student advising responsibilities; and other topics, most of which ordinarily would classify as department chairman responsibilities.

How far this has gone is illustrated in the classification of the

department head's duties in the 1973 agreement recently approved for the Community College of Allegheny in Pennsylvania. The 17 duties are divided on the basis of: (1) those performed in cooperation with the faculty, (2) those performed in cooperation with the faculty but subject to the final approval of the executive dean, (3) those performed for the executive dean, and, (4) "such other unspecified duties...qualitatively and quantitatively similar to those specified in this description." The number of duties under each category is five, nine, two and one, respectively.

In some personnel matters a chairman's influence reaches the vanishing point. For example, workloads in terms of weekly teaching hours and class sizes are so minutely described that little leeway is left for the chairman except to determine by a prescribed formula whether or not the faculty member has an adequate workload, an underload or an overload. How to compensate for either an underload or overload is also outlined in the contract. In the matter of salaries chairmen rarely have had responsibility for rating-in of new instructors and for advancement of regular instructors on salary schedules based on educational preparation and experience. Where merit-type salary schedules are in effect a chairman's evaluation of an instructor may have some influence on his advancement, but his influence is attenuated by departmental or divisional faculty evaluation committees. The same observation may be made about the chairman's influence on the retention or termination of an instructor. His recommendation is only part of a fairly elaborate process, including a joint administration-faculty committee on which bargaining unit members comprise a majority (Macomb, 1972), (Massachusetts, Mount Washington, 1976). The ultimate development in this regard is a contract that specifies

that evaluation can only be made by an instructor's peers.

Conclusion: As we have indicated in this discussion the role of the chairman is bound up with the movement toward participatory democracy, collective bargaining and the administrators' efforts to maintain or regain control of the management of the teaching-learning unit. The conclusion that emerges from the analysis of the department chairman's duties and responsibilities is that the chairman will become a ministerial officer who acts as the "servant" of the faculty performing duties in cooperation with the faculty and/or in accordance with directions established in policy manuals, state laws and collective bargaining agreements. Even in the substitute organizations being tried out in various colleges, faculty prerogatives continue to increase. The new administrators of the teaching-learning units will have to share with faculty the exercise of their authority.

Not all administrators accept the development of this role. Some are countering it by giving the chairman more authority and others by substituting a new teaching-learning unit which reduces the importance of the instructor by placing the major responsibility for learning on the student. These new learning units displace the department and the chairman, require fewer instructors and are managed by a second or a third echelon administrator. If the administrators succeed in eliminating the department and introduce a systems plan of instruction they will create an educational revolution comparable to that created by automation in industry.

In addition this analysis shows that:

1. The average number of duties performed by chairmen may not be larger than 10 or 15. In collective bargaining agreements that define a

chairman's duties, the number also tends to be low with a range of 10 to 16.

2. Chairmen in assessing the duties and their importance rank those in general administration, curriculum and instruction, and teacher improvement as the most essential; and those in the area of student and community relations as the least essential.

3. Administrators have been reluctant to delegate authority commensurate with the duties assigned. Seldom are chairmen given the major responsibility to decide in such matters as faculty orientation, hiring, retention, salaries, promotion and tenure, and the size of the divisional budget.

4. For the next five to ten years the chairman will continue as the principal quasi-administrative officer of the department/division. The movement toward displacing the department/division is making slow progress.

5. Divisions or units combining several subjects or disciplines will continue to increase. Some will be headed by an administrator; others by a chairman.

6. Collective bargaining agreements often define the status of the chairman as faculty or non-faculty.

Finally, enumerating duties has very little bearing on the quality of performance of the chairman as a quasi-administrator or as a ministerial functionary in his department. Whether the duties number ten, twenty-five, or fifty is not as important as how the chairman performs. It is also obvious that chairmen are functioning with varying degrees of success under authoritarian, permissive, autonomous, teacher-centered management styles;

as a ministerial officer or as a quasi-administrator; in colleges operating under collective bargaining agreements and in those without. The success of a particular chairman depends upon the interaction of these relationships with his own personality characteristics and to an appraisal of the areas in which he may exercise leadership. Even in those areas which are minutely outlined in a collective bargaining agreement or policy manual, interpretation is often necessary.

An energetic and resourceful chairman has many opportunities to exercise leadership and administrative initiative even in the most restrictive environment. He is in constant touch with the instructors, the teaching operation and the students. There is little to prevent him from cooperating with instructors in the improvement of instruction, in exploration of new developments in the discipline and in teaching techniques, in the evaluation of the department's mission as revealed by follow-up of students on transfer, on results of state examinations, or on the job and by student evaluations. An indifferent chairman will do as little as possible and refer all but routine decisions to the dean. Difficult as it may be to avoid being subservient to the faculty and submissive to the dean, many chairmen have succeeded in accomplishing this difficult feat; some have achieved eminence in doing so.

Leadership can be exercised even in colleges with collective bargaining agreements. Just as the chief administrator has adapted to the new relationships with faculty and with the bureaucracy of the employee bargaining unit so can the chairman. If resistance rather than accommodation becomes the covert or overt policy the stresses will increase. Ultimately, accommodation will have to be made; participatory democracy and collective bargaining are

not going to disappear nor will the form of governance revert to that of the pre-World War II era. In the new environment the chairman will be more a leader among the faculty rather than a supervisor over them.

If the chairman fails to provide the leadership required to fulfill institutional and departmental goals and to develop an effective teaching-learning situation, then the chief administrator will redouble his efforts to find a substitute pattern of governance that does not include the chairman.

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